

What is claimed is:

1. A method of determining a best practice for performing
5 a task, comprising:
 - defining a provisional-best-practice for performing the
task based on collaboration among a plurality of designated
team members;
 - creating a test for determining individual-preferred-
10 practice for performing the task, the test comprising at
least one test question and an answer corresponding to each
test question;
 - administering the test to a plurality of test takers
comprising individuals who perform the task but are not
15 designated team members;
 - determining for each of the plurality of test takers a
test score representing the degree of consistency between
individual-preferred-practice and the provisional-best-
practice;
 - 20 identifying each test question for which the
corresponding test answer disagrees with answers to that
test question provided by a predetermined proportion of test
takers whose test scores represent at least a selected

degree of consistency between individual-preferred-practice and the provisional-best-practice; and

deciding, responsive to the identifying step, whether the provisional-best-practice can be designated as the best
5 practice.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined proportion is less than fifty percent.

10 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined proportion selects fewer than 100 test takers.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the creating step comprises:

15 initially administering the test to the designated team members; and

evaluating the test responsive to the initially administering step.

20 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the creating step further comprises changing the test.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

collecting comments concerning the test questions and
corresponding answers identified in the identifying step;
and

modifying the provisional-best-practice responsive to
5 the collecting step.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the administering step uses
electronic telecommunications.

10 8. A method of determining a best practice for performing
a task, comprising:

defining a provisional-best-practice for performing the
task based on collaboration among a plurality of designated
team members;

15 creating over a first network a test for determining
individual-preferred-practice for performing the task, the
test comprising at least one test question and an answer
corresponding to each test question;

administering the test over a second network to a
20 plurality of test takers comprising individuals who perform
the task but are not designated team members;

determining for each of the plurality of test takers a
test score representing the degree of consistency between

individual-preferred-practice and the provisional-best-practice;

identifying each test question for which the corresponding test answer disagrees with answers to that test question provided by a predetermined proportion of test takers whose test scores represent at least a selected degree of consistency between individual-preferred-practice and the provisional-best-practice; and

deciding, responsive to the identifying step, whether the provisional-best-practice can be designated as the best practice.

9. A method of testing individuals who perform a task for consistency between individual-preferred-practice for performing the task and a best practice for performing the task, comprising:

creating a test for determining individual-preferred-practice for performing the task, the test comprising at least one test question and an answer corresponding to each test question;

administering the test to a plurality of test takers comprising individuals who perform the task;

determining for each of the plurality of test takers a test score representing the degree of consistency between individual-preferred-practice and the best practice;

identifying each test question for which the

5 corresponding test answer disagrees with answers to that test question provided by a predetermined proportion of test takers whose test scores represent at least a selected degree of consistency between individual-preferred-practice and the best practice; and

10 modifying the test responsive to the identifying step.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the predetermined proportion is less than fifty percent.

15 11. The method of claim 9, wherein the predetermined proportion selects fewer than 100 test takers.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein the creating step comprises:

20 initially administering the test to designated team members; and

evaluating the test responsive to the initially administering step.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the creating step further comprises changing the test.

5 14. The method of claim 9, further comprising the steps of:
collecting comments concerning the test questions and
corresponding answers identified in the identifying step;
and
modifying the test responsive to the collecting step.

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15. The method of claim 9, wherein the administering step uses electronic telecommunications.

16. A method of testing individuals who perform a task for
15 consistency between individual-preferred-practice for
performing the task and a best practice for performing the
task, comprising:

creating over a first network a test for determining
individual-preferred-practice for performing the task, the
20 test comprising at least one test question and an answer
corresponding to each test question;

administering the test over a second network to a plurality of test takers comprising individuals who perform the task;

determining for each of the plurality of test takers a
5 test score representing the degree of consistency between individual-preferred-practice and the best practice;

identifying each test question for which the corresponding test answer disagrees with answers to that test question provided by a predetermined proportion of test
10 takers whose test scores represent at least a selected degree of consistency between individual-preferred-practice and the best practice; and

modifying the test responsive to the identifying step.

15 17. The method of claim 9, wherein the modifying step comprises:

amending the answer corresponding to at least one of the test questions identified in the identifying step to reflect the most common answer, to that test question, by
20 the predetermined proportion of test takers; and

re-determining, responsive to the amending step, the test score for each of the plurality of test takers.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the modifying step further comprises:

communicating the modified answer to at least one of the test takers.

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19. The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of implementing the best practice by communicating the modified answer to at least one of the test takers.

10 20. The method of claims 18 or 19, wherein the communicating step occurs over a network.

21. The method of claim 9 wherein the modifying step comprises:

15 eliminating from the test each question identified in the identifying step; and

re-determining, responsive to the eliminating step, the test score for each of the plurality of test takers.

20 22. The method of claim 21, wherein the modifying step further comprises:

communicating the eliminated question to at least one of the test takers.

23. The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of implementing the best practice by communicating the eliminated question to at least one of the test takers.

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24. The method of claims 22 or 23, wherein the communicating step occurs over a network.

25. The method of claim 9, wherein the modifying step

10 comprises:

collecting comments concerning the questions and corresponding answers from the predetermined proportion of test takers;

amending, responsive to the collecting step, the answer
15 corresponding to at least one question identified in the identifying step;

re-determining, responsive to the amending step, the test score for each of the plurality of test takers.

20 26. The method of claim 25, wherein the amending step further comprises:

communicating to each test taker the collected comments.

27. The method of claim 25, further comprising the step of implementing the best practice by communicating the collected comments to at least one of the test takers.

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28. The method of claims 26 or 27, wherein the communicating step occurs over a network.

29. A method of distributed calibration of a test,
10 comprising:
creating a test, the test comprising at least one test question and a provisional-best-answer corresponding to each test question;
administering the test to a plurality of test takers;
15 determining for each of the plurality of test takers a test score representing the degree of consistency between provisional-best-answers and test-taker-answers;
identifying each test question for which the provisional-best-answer disagrees with the test-taker-answer
20 provided by a predetermined proportion of test takers whose test scores represent at least a selected degree of overall consistency between provisional-best-answers and test-taker-answers; and

deciding, responsive to the identifying step, whether the provisional-best-answers can be designated as the best answers.

5 30. The method of claim 29, wherein the predetermined proportion is less than fifty percent.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein the predetermined proportion selects fewer than 100 test takers.

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32. The method of claim 29, wherein the creating step comprises:

initially administering the test to designated team members; and

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evaluating the test responsive to the initially administering step.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the creating step further comprises changing the test.

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34. The method of claim 29, further comprising the steps of:

collecting comments concerning the test questions and
provisional-best-answers identified in the identifying step;
and

modifying the test responsive to the collecting step.

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35. The method of claim 29, wherein the administering step
uses electronic telecommunications.

36. A method of distributed calibration of a test,
10 comprising:

creating over a first network a test, the test
comprising at least one test question and a provisional-
best-answer corresponding to each test question;

administering the test over a second network to a
15 plurality of test takers;

determining for each of the plurality of test takers a
test score representing the degree of consistency between
provisional-best-answers and test-taker-answers;

identifying each test question for which the
20 provisional-best-answer disagrees with the test-taker-answer
provided by a predetermined proportion of test takers whose
test scores represent at least a selected degree of overall

consistency between provisional-best-answers and test-taker-answers; and

deciding, responsive to the identifying step, whether the provisional-best-answers can be designated as the best
5 answers.

37. The method of claim 29, wherein the deciding step comprises:

amending the provisional-best-answer corresponding to
10 at least one of the test questions identified in the identifying step to reflect the most common answer, to that test question, by the predetermined proportion of test takers; and

deciding, responsive to the amending step, whether the
15 amended provisional-best-answer can be designated as the best answer.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the deciding step further comprises:

20 communicating the amended provisional-best-answer to at least one of the test takers.

39. The method of claim 38, wherein the communicating step occurs over a network.

40. The method of claim 29, wherein the deciding step

5 comprises:

eliminating from the test each question identified in the identifying step; and

deciding, responsive to the eliminating step, whether the remaining provisional-best-answers can be designated the

10 best answers.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein the deciding step further comprises:

communicating the eliminated question to at least one
15 of the test takers.

42. The method of claim 41, wherein the communicating step occurs over a network.

20 43. The method of claim 29, wherein the deciding step comprises:

collecting comments concerning the test questions and
corresponding answers from the predetermined proportion of
test takers;

amending, responsive to the collecting step, the
5 provisional-best-answer corresponding to at least one test
question identified in the identifying step;

deciding, responsive to the amending step, whether the
amended provisional-best-answer can be designated as the
best answer.

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44. The method of claim 43, wherein the amending step
further comprises:

communicating to each test taker the collected
comments.

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45. The method of claim 44, wherein the communicating step
occurs over a network.

46. A method for assessing compliance with a best practice
20 for performing a task, comprising the steps of:

identifying the best practice;

creating a test to measure consistency between individual-preferred-practice for performing the task and the best practice;

administering the test to members of a group of
5 individuals who perform the task;

designating, responsive to the administering step, at least one member of the group as a qualified reviewer,

conducting a review, by at least one qualified reviewer, of actual practices of other individuals for
10 performing the task; and

analyzing, responsive to the review-conducting step, the consistency of the actual practices with the best practice.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein the identifying step
15 comprises:

convening a plurality of experts in the performance of the task;

collaborating, among the experts, to develop a
20 questionnaire concerning the performance of the task;

administering the questionnaire to the plurality of experts with respect to at least one case study involving performance of the task;

evaluating the results of the questionnaire-
administering step; and

converging, responsive to the evaluating step, on the
best practice.

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48. The method of claims 46 or 47, wherein the review-
conducting step comprises conducting a review, by at least
one qualified reviewer, of actual practices, by other
individuals employed by the same organization, for
10 performing the task.

49. The method of claims 46 or 47, wherein the designating
step comprises designating, responsive to the administering
step, at least one member of the group as a qualified
15 reviewer to review actual practices of a statistically
significant sample of a relevant population of individuals
who perform the task.

50. The method of claims 46 or 47, further comprising the
20 steps of:

reporting the results of the analyzing step to
management;

formulating programs to train individuals in performing the best practice; and

conducting training, by the qualified reviewers, of other individuals in use of the best practice.

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51. A method for identifying the best practice for performing a task and measuring compliance with it, comprising the steps of:

developing a questionnaire to identify steps that are
10 involved in performing the task;

administering the questionnaire to individuals who are experts in performing the task;

identifying, responsive to the questionnaire-administering step, a best practice for performing the task;

15 creating a test to measure consistency between individual-preferred-practice for performing the task and the best practice;

administering the test to a members of a group of individuals who perform the task;

20 designating, responsive to the administering step, at least one member of the group as a qualified reviewer,

conducting a review, by at least one qualified reviewer, of actual practices of other individuals for performing the task; and

analyzing, responsive to the review-conducting step,
5 the consistency of the actual practices with the best practice.

52. A method of determining a best practice for performing a task, comprising:

10 convening a plurality of successful performers of the task;

collaborating, among the successful performers, to develop a questionnaire concerning steps taken in performing the task;

15 administering the questionnaire to the plurality of successful performers with respect to at least one case of actual practice involving performance of the task;

evaluating the results of the questionnaire-administering step; and

20 converging, responsive to the evaluating step, on the best practice.

53. The method of claim 52, wherein the collaborating step uses electronic telecommunications.

54. The method of claim 52, wherein the administering step
5 uses electronic telecommunications.

55. A method of determining a best practice for performing a task, comprising:

convening a plurality of successful performers of the
10 task;

collaborating, among the successful performers, over a network to develop a questionnaire concerning the steps taken in performing the task;

administering the questionnaire over a second network
15 to the plurality of successful performers with respect to at least one case of actual practice involving performance of the task;

evaluating the results of the questionnaire-administering step; and

20 converging, responsive to the evaluating step, on the best practice.

56. The method of each of claims 1 through 8, wherein the task is an insurance claims-processing task.

57. The method of each of claims 1 through 8, wherein the task is an insurance underwriting task.

58. The method of each of claims 9 through 28, wherein the task is an insurance claims-processing task.

59. The method of each of claims 9 through 28, wherein the task is an insurance underwriting task.

60. The method of each of claims 29 through 45, wherein the test is a test of insurance claims-processing skills and the test takers are individuals who perform insurance claims-processing tasks.

61. The method of each of claims 29 through 45, wherein the test is a test of insurance underwriting skills and the test takers are individuals who perform insurance underwriting tasks.

62. The method of each of claims 46 through 55, wherein the task is an insurance claims-processing task.

63. The method of each of claims 46 through 55, wherein the task is an insurance underwriting task.